LESSON 1: GRATITUDE

GOD CREATED THE WORLD

Genesis 1:1–25

GOD CREATED THE WORLD

- Genesis 1:1–25
- Big Picture Q&A: Why did God create the world? God created the world and everything in it for His glory.
- Key Passage: Revelation 4:11 – Our Lord and God, You are worthy to receive glory and honor and power, because You have created all things, and by Your will they exist and were created.

JESUS CONNECTION

Jesus is Lord over everything. Everything was created by Him and for Him. Jesus holds everything together (Colossians 1:16–17).

LIFEWISE QUALITY

GRATITUDE – To appreciate what someone has done for or given to me.

LEADER BIBLE STUDY

In the beginning, God created everything. God created the universe *ex nihilo*, or "out of nothing." All of creation began with a word. When God spoke, it happened. Light, land, sky, stars, plants and animals. God made them all, and they were good. Creation was perfect, just as God intended.

Every story in the Bible is a small piece of a much bigger story—God's redemptive story. Sin would enter the world and affect everything, but God already knew. He already had a plan to show His grace to people through His Son (2 Tim. 1:9), to rescue and restore. In fact, the Bible says that God's plan existed before He created the world (Eph. 1:4-6).

The Bible is the story of how a great God redeemed rebellious people by sending His Son, Jesus, to be the perfect sacrifice for sin. The story of Jesus does not begin in a manger. The Son has always existed, and He was present at creation. He is the Word through whom all things were created (John 1:1-3).

Colossians 1:16-17 says that everything was created by Him and for Him, and He holds everything together. Through creation, we see and understand God's eternal power and divine nature (Rom. 1:20).

As you begin teaching students about creation, help them discover who God is. Remind them that God created everything with a purpose, to bring Him glory. Psalm 19:1 says, "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky proclaims the work of His hands."

The book of Genesis is the beginning of the greatest story ever told. It is a true story, and at the center of it all is the true hero, our Savior, Jesus Christ. This story changes everything.

BIBLE TIMELINE & REVIEW (3 MIN)

Let's look at our giant timeline. We are starting here, at the beginning. Did you know that even though the Bible is made up of a lot of different stories, it all tells one big story? The Bible is the story of how God created everything and how, when we turned away from Him, He brought us back to Himself by sending His Son, Jesus, to save us from sin.

SESSION STARTERS (5 MIN)

Creation Drawings (Older Students)

- Form two teams. Invite one player from each team to come to the front of the room. Give each player a marker and explain that you will whisper something that God created. students should then draw the creation on the board. The first team to guess what their teammate is drawing earns a point. [*Suggested words: sun, moon, stars, flower, tree, lion, giraffe, owl and so forth.*]

- Who created all of the things that you drew? Yes, God created everything! We are going to hear more about the beginning of the world in today's Bible story.

Creation Challenge (Older Students)

- Scatter an assortment of construction materials on a table. Allow students to work all together or form smaller groups. Explain that students will have a chance to create. Call out created items one at a time and give students a couple of minutes to create. Invite students to share their creations. [*Suggested items: sun, star, tree, bird.*]

- Good try, everyone. Your creations kind of looked like the real things; maybe you didn't have the right supplies. Do you know what God used to make everything? Nothing! That's right. God created everything out of nothing. He spoke, and it happened. Let's find out more.

Out of Nothing (Younger Students)

- Form groups of four to six students. Give each group a bag of supplies. Explain that groups will work together to create different items from the supplies. Challenge groups to build the tallest tower or the strongest bridge. Choose a winner with each assignment. Be mindful of how much time you have and use a timer to limit time for each build. Pretend to pour the contents from an empty bag.

- Could you create something out of nothing just by talking? God is so powerful that He created everything just by speaking it into existence. God created everything for His glory. How do you feel when you look at something beautiful that God has created? We can praise God for all the wonderful things He has made!

Creating a Masterpiece (Younger Students)

- Display a painting or other handmade item in a place the students can see. Ask them what supplies they would need to create something like this and allow them time to brainstorm a list.

- We need supplies to make just about everything (a painting, a pizza, a car, a computer) but God didn't. When He created the world and everything in it, He created it out of nothing, using only His power. What an amazing God!

KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY/BIG PICTURE Q&A (5 MIN)

Revelation 4:11

Our Lord and God, You are worthy to receive glory and honor and power, because You have created all things, and by Your will they exist and were created.

Shout, Say, Whisper (Older Students)

- Make up hand motions for key words to help them memorize the first part of the verse.
- Display the key passage poster. Lead the students to read it aloud together. Then, form two groups. Lead the first group in reading a few words of the key passage, then pause while the second group echoes the first. Repeat until students say the entire verse. If your group is large, form three groups and guide the first group to say the phrase loudly, the second group to echo at a normal volume and the third group to whisper.
- Let's try to memorize this verse over the next few weeks. When we memorize words from the Bible, we remember what is true. This verse tells us about God and creation. God created everything for His glory.

Memory Verse Toss (Younger Students)

- Make sure the key passage, Revelation 4:11, is visible for each child, either on a printed poster or written on a dry erase board. Read the verse together.
- Before class, write each word of the key passage on separate paper plates and hide the plates around the room. Create two sets (use different colored markers to differentiate between the two sets).
- Form two teams and assign each a color. Place a jump rope on the ground for the teams to stand behind in a straight line. One player from each team will take turns looking for plates until all are found. After the plates are found, choose one child from each team to hold the hula hoop a few feet from the jump rope. Guide each player to toss the paper plates through the hula hoop from behind the jump rope in the order of the verse, reading the word aloud as a team as each plate is tossed.

Big Picture Q&A

Q: Why did God create the world?
A: *God created the world and everything in it for His glory.*

BIBLE STORY (10 MIN)

God Created the World | Genesis 1:1–25

In the beginning, nothing existed except for God. **God** spoke and **created the heavens and the earth.** When He first created the earth, it had no shape, and total darkness covered the earth. The Spirit of God was there, hovering over the waters.

God spoke. **He said, "Let there be light!"** and what God said happened. Light was created. **God saw that the light was good,** and He separated the light from the darkness. God called the light *day*, and He called the darkness *night*. **Evening came, and then morning came. That was the first day of creation.**
God spoke again: "Let there be an expanse between the waters to separate them." What God said happened. He made a space between the water that was on the earth and the water that was above the earth. **God called the space between the divided waters *sky*. Evening came, and then morning came. That was the second day of creation.**

God said, "Let the water under the sky be gathered into one place, and let the dry land appear." What God said happened. God called the dry land *earth*, and He called the gathered water *seas*. **God saw that it was good. Then, God said, "Let the earth make plants and trees with fruits and seeds."** What God said happened. Plants and trees grew, and God saw that it was good. **Evening came, and then morning came. That was the third day of creation.**

Next, God placed lights in the sky. God created the sun to shine during the day and the moon and stars to shine at night. God gave us lights to provide light on the earth, to separate day from night, and to help us track time in days and years. **God saw that it was good. Evening came, and then morning came. That was the fourth day of creation.**

Next, God made creatures that move and swim in the water. He made birds to flap their wings and **soar across the sky. God saw that it was good.** God told the animals to multiply, and they filled the seas and the sky. **Evening came, and then morning came. That was the fifth day of creation.**

Then, God made more animals—livestock, creatures that crawl and wildlife to live on the earth. When God said it, it happened. **And God saw that it was good.**

JESUS CONNECTION

Jesus is Lord over everything. Everything was created by Him and for Him. Jesus holds everything together (Colossians 1:16–17).

LIFEWISE QUALITY (3–4 MIN)

GRATITUDE – To appreciate what someone has done for or given to me.

Living LifeWise

Because God created everything, we can show gratitude for Him and all that He made.

Character Connection

Think of something you own that you really like. What is it? [*Take answers.*] How do you treat that thing? How do you expect your friends or siblings to treat it? [*Take answers.*]

God is the owner and creator of all things. And He shares everything He made with us. He didn't have to make anything at all. And He didn't have to share any of it with us. But He did. That is why we can be grateful for all that He made. How do we thank God for what He made?

The opposite of a grateful heart is an unthankful heart. When we aren't thankful, we tend to treat what God made badly. We might be selfish with what God created. We might not be careful with it. What does it look like to be unthankful?

How could the person in each example show gratitude for what they have been given?

- The teacher decides to let the class watch a movie as a reward for good behavior.
- A neighbor bakes you cookies, but you don't like them.
- The Christmas gift from a relative is NOT what you wanted.

BIBLE STORY REVIEW (5 MIN)

- How did God create the heavens and the earth?

  He spoke, and it happened; Gen. 1:3

- What did God call the light and darkness?

  Day and night, Gen. 1:5

- What did God make on the third day of creation?

  Earth, seas, plants, trees; Gen. 1:9–13

- What did God create to shine at night?

  Moon and stars, Gen. 1:16

- Was God's creation bad or good?

  It was good; Gen. 1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25

- When did God make birds?

  On the fifth day of creation, Gen. 1:20

- Why did God create the world?

  God created the world and everything in it for His glory.

REINFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES (5-10 MIN)

Creation Rhythm (Older Students)

- Have students sit in a circle. Distribute Bibles and instruct students to open to the Book of Genesis. Explain that the word *genesis* means "the beginning." The book of Genesis is the first book in the Bible. It tells us about the beginning of the world, when only God existed. No one created God; He has always existed. The Bible tells us that God created everything! We can read about creation in Genesis 1.

- Call out a reference and invite students to find the verse in their Bibles. For each reference, ask students what God created.

  - Genesis 1:3 (*Light*)
  - Genesis 1:6–8 (*Sky*)
  - Genesis 1:9–10 (*Earth, seas*)
  - Genesis 1:11–12 (*Plants, trees*)
  - Genesis 1:16 (*Sun, moon, stars*)
  - Genesis 1:20 (*Fish, birds*)

- Begin a slow pat-pat-clap-clap-pat-pat-clap rhythm as you teach them a rhyme to remember the days of creation. Pat or clap for each syllable. Students may pat their legs or the floor. Say the rhyme a few times, encouraging students to repeat the words after you.

    - God created on Day 1
      He made light where there was none.
      God created on Day 2
      Space called sky, the sky so blue.
      God created on Day 3
      Earth and seas and plants and trees.
      God created on Day 4
      Sun and moon and stars galore!
      God created on Day 5
      Fish to swim and birds to fly.
      God created on Day 6
      Added land creatures to the mix.

The Days of Creation (Older Students)

- Write the numbers 1–6 on separate craft sticks and put them in a small gift bag. Have students form a large circle and pass the bag around the circle, silently or to music, until you signal for the bag to stop. Whoever is holding the bag will pick a craft stick without looking and announce the number on it. Ask the student to name something God created on that day of creation. If they cannot correctly name something God made on that day, give a small physical task the group should do that number of times. For example, one push-up, two sit-ups, three squats, four twirls or five jumping jacks. Refer to the following verses to check students' answers. (*Day 1, Gen. 1:1–5; Day 2, Gen. 1:6–8; Day 3, Gen. 1:9–13; Day 4, Gen. 1:14–19; Day 5, Gen. 1:20–25.*)

- Isn't God's creation a wonderful gift to us? He made all of these things out of nothing! When God spoke, it happened. We have to work much harder to make things.

Creation Riddles (Older Students)

- Before the story, write the numbers 1–6 on separate sheets of paper and tape them around the room. Ask the riddles below. Challenge students to think of what the riddle describes, then move to stand next to the numbered paper that matches the day that thing was created.

    - This type of energy travels faster than anything else. (*Day 1, light*)
    - This might look red, orange, purple or yellow, but most of the time it looks blue. (*Day 2, sky*)
    - More than 20,000 types of these exist in the world—have you ever seen an evergreen, cottonwood, maple or elm? (*Day 3, trees*)
    - No one has ever counted them, but experts estimate our galaxy is home to about 300 billion of these. (*Day 4, stars*)
    - An albatross is a type of this animal. It can travel thousands of miles without stopping. (*Day 5, bird*)
    - These creatures include giraffes, elephants, lions and turtles. (*Day 6, wildlife*)

Creation Walk (Younger Students)

- Where is the Book of Genesis located in the Bible? (*The first book.*) Who wrote Genesis? (*Moses.*) Moses wrote the Pentateuch, or the Law, which are the first five books of the Bible. The Bible is God's Word. God chose people to write down the message He gave them.

- Use the small group timeline to show students today's Bible story. Point to the first picture. Explain that God the Father, God the Son and God the Spirit have always existed (see John 1:1–4). God did not begin at the beginning of the timeline because He has always been and always will be. God is eternal. Our timeline begins when God created everything for His glory. Write the numbers 1–6 on separate sheets of paper and tape them around the room.

- As you review the Bible story, ask students to stand by the number that indicates what day of creation you are speaking about. Ask classes with more advanced writers to take a pencil with them so that they can list on that sheet of paper some of the things that God created on that specific day:

    - Great white shark
    - Cactus
    - T-Rex
    - Bald eagle
    - Mount Everest
    - Strawberries
    - The Pacific Ocean
    - The moon
    - The North Star
    - The cheetah

Creation Song (Younger Students)

- Make up motions and sing to the tune of "He's Got the Whole World in His Hands." Instruct the students to start singing "and God saw it was good" quietly with the first verse and get louder on each refrain.

    On the first day, God made light! On the first day, God made night.
    On the first day, God made light, and God saw it was good!
    On the second day God made the sky, way above our heads, so high
    On the second day God made the sky, and God saw it was good!
    On the third day, God made dry land, and the trees and the plants just as He planned
    On the third day, God made land, and God saw it was good!
    On the fourth day, God made the sun, and the moon and the stars, He made every one.
    On the fourth day God made the sun, and God saw it was good.
    On the fifth day, God made fish and birds, the little swimming fishes and the flying birds
    On the fifth day, fish and birds, and God saw it was good.
    On the sixth day, God made man, and all the animals on the land
    On the sixth day God made man, and God saw it was good.
    On the seventh day, God took a rest, He looked around and called it blessed.
    On the seventh day God took a rest, and God saw it was good!

What Day? (Younger Students)

- Guide students to help you make up motions for each of the six days. For example, for Day 1, they might hold up both arms as if they are seeing light for the first time, or they might make a big circle with their arms because God created the earth. On Day 2, they might make waves with their arms to indicate that God separated the waters from the sky. For Day 3, students might stand or bend like a tree. Continue making motions to illustrate what happened on each day. Review them a few times before beginning the game. Call out one of the days. Challenge them to do the motion for the day.

Worship Pictures (Younger Students)

- Give students individual pieces of paper. Guide them to draw things that God created that inspire them to worship Him.

Activity Pages & Recap Cards (5–10 min) (For in-class or take-home use)

- Creation Scene Search (Older Students)
- Creation Maze (Younger Students)

Prayer & Requests (3–5 min)

Heavenly Father, Your creation is so wonderful! When we see it, we remember You! You made everything for Your glory. When we enjoy a sunset or admire an animal or feel the cool air on our faces, we give praise to You! Turn our hearts toward You every day. We love You. Amen.

Journal Page

What part of God's creation do you enjoy the most? Describe it here or draw a picture of something God created.

FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS

- What are some things God created? (See Genesis 1–2.)
- What does it mean to bring God glory?
- How can you and your family bring God glory this week?

FOLD

GOD CREATED THE WORLD

GENESIS 1:1–25

MAIN POINT: GOD CREATED EVERYTHING FOR HIS GLORY.

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.

He said, "Let there be light!"

God saw that the light was good. Evening came, and then morning came. That was the first day of creation.

God spoke again: "Let there be an expanse between the waters to separate them."

God called the expanse *sky*. Evening came, and then morning came. That was the second day of creation.

God said, "Let the water under the sky be gathered into one place, and let the dry land appear."

God saw that it was good.

Then God said, "Let the earth make plants and trees with fruits and seeds." Evening came, and then morning came. That was the third day of creation.

Next, God placed lights in the sky. God created the sun to shine during the day and the moon and stars to shine at night. God saw that it was good. Evening came, and then morning came. That was the fourth day of creation.

Next, God made creatures that move and swim in the water. God saw that it was good. Evening came, and then morning came. That was the fifth day of creation.

Then God made more animals, and God saw that it was good.

Jesus Connection: *The Bible says that Jesus is Lord over all of creation. Everything was created by Him and for Him. The Son has always existed, and He holds everything together. (Colossians 1:16-17)*

Key Passage: *Revelation 4:11 – Our Lord and God, You are worthy to receive glory and honor and power, because You have created all things, and by Your will they exist and were created.*

THE BIG QUESTION

Why did God create the world?
Unscramble the words to find the answer.

GOD _____ ACDTREE

THE _____ AND WODLR

_____ TERNVIYGEH

IN IT FOR HIS _____ RGLOY

CREATION SCENE SEARCH

Two of these animals are NOT in the creation scene.
Can you find them?

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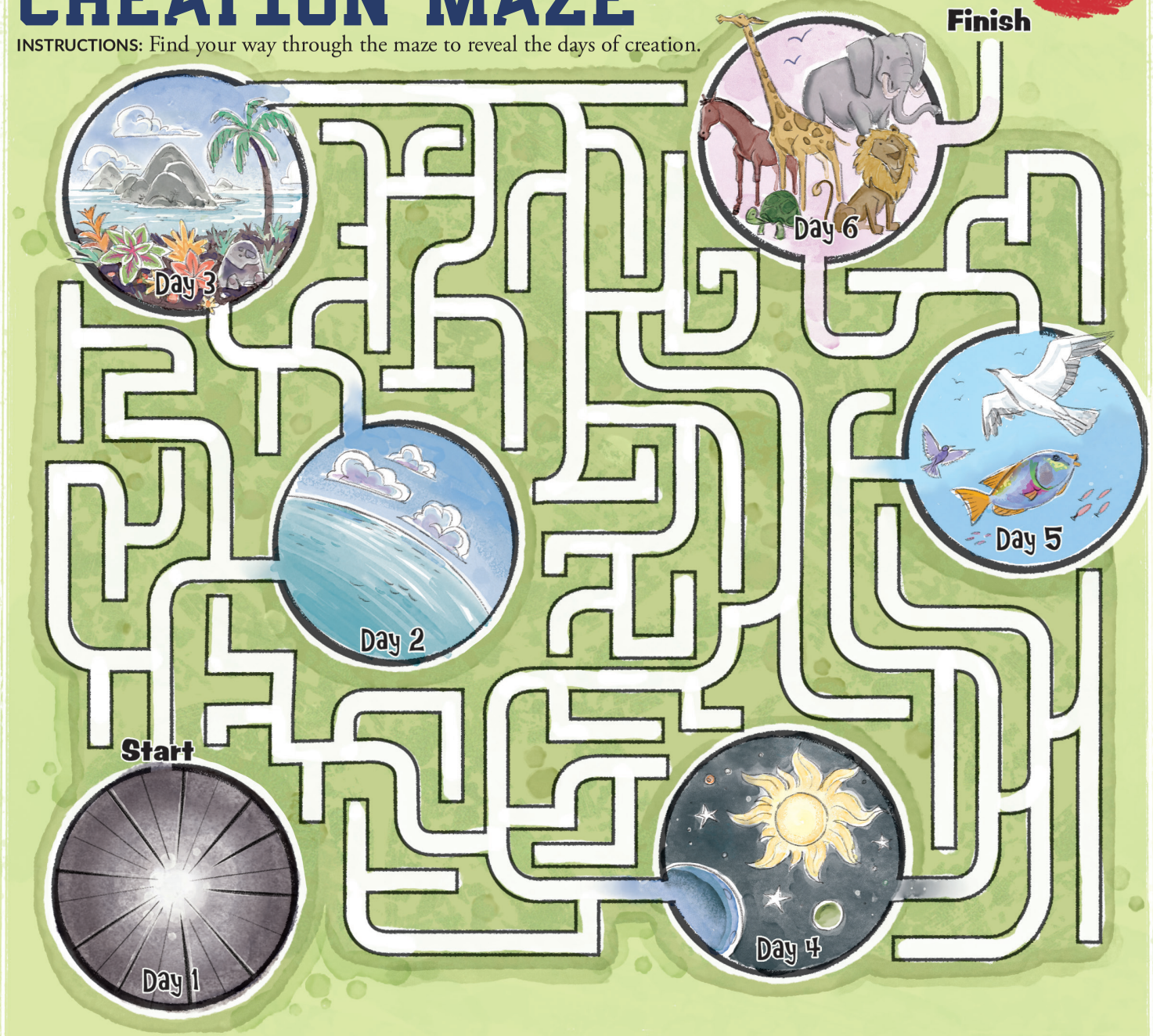
CREATION MAZE

INSTRUCTIONS: Find your way through the maze to reveal the days of creation.



KEY PASSAGE:
Revelation 4:11 – Our Lord and God, You are worthy to receive glory and honor and power, because You have created all things, and by Your will they exist and were created.

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:
- Why did God create the world? God created the world and everything in it for His glory.

BIBLE STORY:
GOD CREATED THE WORLD
- In the beginning, there was nothing but God.
- God made the world out of nothing.
- God saw everything He made was good.
- God planned for all of creation to bring Him glory.

FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS:
- What are some things that God created? (See Genesis 1–2.)
- What does it mean to bring God glory?
- How can you and your family bring God glory this week?

FAMILY ACTIVITY:
- As you are riding in a vehicle, lead kids to observe God's creation around you. Talk about how God's creation displays His glory. Pray as a family, thanking God for His creation.
- Go further: Take a family nature walk.

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GOD CREATED EVERYTHING FOR HIS GLORY.